

daintiest of birds. And what a marvel of grace and loveliness she was.

Only a slight ashen-red bird, but how delicate and subtle were the shifting tints of that subdued color, or rarest mingling of colors, in that reddish, yellowish, grayish plumage, set off with a shining ring on every tiniest feather-tip, as beautiful in its diminutive way as those of a peacock, and lustrous as a Bird of

Paradise. And such a fairy-fine form, of such exquisite finish! Her bill was long and slim, and she had slender legs on which she stood, tall, and a nice little body — she was fashioned perfectly from top to toe! and if her long strong wings were good for flying, her wiry legs were as good for running, so she was at home on the ground or in the air — this nimble-footed, infantile, bewitching, irresistible Ariel of a bird.

HOW THE GREAT PLAY WAS ACTED.

BY AGNES REPPLIER.

THE all important night for which the little girls of Miss Muddleson's school had been plotting and planning and preparing themselves, for at least two months, had at last arrived; and the event of the season, the great play of "Michael Angelo Buonaroti," as dramatized by Lizzie Rollins, was announced to come off that very evening without fail.

Such a hopeless flurry as there had been all day; such a gathering together of the theatrical wardrobes, to deposit them in any corner where they could find a restingplace; such hurried drilling of a few who were utterly incapable of retaining their five or six lines in their heads — amid the general tumult, what wonder that a twelve-year-old stage manager should find herself driven nearly wild by the work to be accomplished; especially when it is taken into consideration that she was also the dramatist, the leading actress, the stage-carpenter, and the manager of the wardrobes! It was well that she had an aide-camp to second all her efforts as vigorously as Minnie Roland, who had assisted in preparing the play, dutifully taken a long part in it, and who now worked hard to reduce the turbulent dramatic corps to something like submission and order.

It was a large boarding-school, and the older girls had acted several little plays with such astonishing success that the minds and hearts of the Second Division had been filled with a great longing to do likewise.

It is true there were more than a few obstacles to be overcome. They had no play, no fancy dresses,

no one to drill them, and, as a rule, no money to buy the things they wanted; but all these difficulties vanished like smoke before the vigor and cleverness of one little girl, the acknowledged leader of the Second Division.

After many secret consultations and much debating, it was at last determined that Lizzie Rollins should dramatize a favorite story about the boyhood of the great sculptor and architect, Michael Angelo, and that Minnie Roland should act as secretary, and copy the parts, which were to be distributed as Lizzie thought best.

All this took a long while, it being a peculiarity of Miss Muddleson's school that although there was plenty of time to study lessons, there was very little to study plays; but by dint of holding rehearsals every day at the noon recreation hour, everybody at last knew what she was to say, and a few had even some faint idea of how they were to say it.

Selecting the actors had been no easy task. Lizzie had modestly declined the leading role of Michael Angelo, and given it to Emma Cullen, a fat girl of thirteen, who acted nicely, and who was much too placid to get flurried under any circumstances, and could consequently be relied on to remember her part. Minnie was to be the painter's father, and Lizzie was to be an old man-servant, named Urbino, who supplied the comic element and had more to say than anybody else in the play. To the prettiest girl in the room, Lillie Middleton, was given the part of Sebastian, Michael Angelo's bosom friend, solely as a tribute to her charms; for



if we did know, we could not get up anything at all like them. We've got to make the clothes ourselves; and I don't believe that anyone who will see us, knows how Michael Angelo really did dress."

"What will we wear, then?" asked an impatient chorus.

"Why, I think the best thing we can do," said Lizzie gravely, "will be to dress all the men —"

"We are all men," put in Annie, "there are no women."

"Well then, to dress ourselves all in short balmoral shirts. They will look like something between a toga and a tunic, and won't be very inappropriate."



SCENES AND ACTORS.

she could not act at all, even if she did not forget what she had to say.

It may perhaps be noticed that all the characters were men and boys, which was rather funny when all the actors were little girls; but a trifle like that never disconcerted these children, and having assigned the different parts, the committee passed on to the momentous question of the dresses.

"I wish we knew," said Minnie, thoughtfully, "what kind of clothes the people wore in Italy about that time. None of you girls ever saw a picture of Michael Angelo, I suppose?"

"We had an engraving of his head at home," suggested Annie Campbell.

"Had he any kind of a hat on?" inquired Lizzie, eagerly.

"No, nothing but hair."

"Then it's of no use, and you needn't have mentioned it," was the disconsolate reply. "Of course Emma will wear her hair. Nobody expects her to leave it off for the occasion; but it would have been something, even to know what kinds of hats they wore."

"Well, I am not so sure of that," said Minnie, who was of a practical turn; the chances are that

"They will look more like kilts than either," grumbled a disaffected actor, "and whatever Michael Angelo might have been, he was not a Highlander."

"Well, what of that?" burst out Minnie rushing to her friend's defence; "you can't



be sure that he did not wear kilts anyhow! You've no idea what he did wear, and so how can you go and say what he did'nt?"

This argument though by no means sound, was felt to be convincing until a quiet girl suggested that she thought the people then all wore doublet and hose.

"So they did?" said the disaffected member.

"Well, perhaps then," remarked Lizzie, with cutting irony, "perhaps, you will send to the city and have five sets of doublet and hose made to order—as I don't see any other way of getting them."

This was a clincher, and two or three girls cried out, "Oh! let's wear the kilts of course! Nobody will expect us to have what we cannot possibly get. Go ahead, Lizzie, and don't mind what anybody says."

"Very well then," said their pacified leader, "we will wear kilts made out of balmoral skirts. We can borrow all the bright-colored ones, and shorten them as we need. Over these we can wear sacks and jackets, with sashes around our waists. And Michael Angelo ought to have a sword."

"That is easily made out of wood," said Minnie; "but you know part of the scenes are in the open air. We must have something on our heads, and we can't possibly wear our hoods."

"Could we not take our best hats and untrim them for the occasion?" suggested Emma Cullen, who naturally thought no sacrifice too great.

"I don't think it would do," said Lizzie, slowly; "in the first place, who would trim them again for us to wear home for vacation? and in the second place, some of them, Minnie's for instance, are not at all suitable shapes; and I don't believe any of the other girls would lend us their hats to untrim. They are all so fussy about their old things!"

"I know," said Minnie, "what will just answer. Let us make caps out of stiff paper, and bind them with red braid."

"The very thing!" was the enthusiastic reply. "Michael Angelo, and Sebastian, and the Duke, are the only ones who need them; and they can be worn a little on one side, and will be really becoming."

"There goes the bell for French class," sighed the fortunate Sebastian; "I wish it would not always ring before we get through!"

"I will start the caps the first thing to-morrow morning," said Lizzie, and the children reluctantly separated for their classes.

Now all was ready—caps, kilts, wooden sword, sashes, and every thing else; and the curtain, made of two sheets, had been stretched across the middle of the class-room. All the actors, even to the venerable father of Michael Angelo, and the magnificent Duke di Medici, had their hair up in curling papers, and Lizzie and Minnie were busy in putting the finishing touches to the white dresses worn by the statues and making up the red bows, which the Duke, in honor of his high rank, was to wear on his shoes and cap.

As evening came on the excitement grew intense. Not only were all the pupils and the teachers coming to see the play, but Mr. Rollins, as an especial honor to his little daughter, was invited to be present; and the thought of a stranger in the audience sent a thrill of awe through the hearts of the more timid actors, and inspired the bolder ones with fresh zeal.

Supper was at last over, and at half-past seven o'clock the play would begin. The room was well filled, and in the front row sat their visitor, tall, handsome, grey-haired, quite as eager as the rest, to see the white curtains go up, or rather go apart—a little girl being stationed at either side to draw them away at the proper minute.

Tinkle, tinkle, rang the prompter's bell, and back went the curtain.

Enter Lizzie as Urbino, soliloquizing, as she brushed and dusted the furniture, with all the airs of a waiting-maid.

A knocking at the gate!

Apparently the domestic force of the Castle of Capresse was not large, for Urbino leaves his dusting to go to the door and admit Sebastian, dressed exactly like Urbino himself, with the addition of the resplendent cap, shaped something like a baker's, but bound with crimson braid, and ornamented with a bright blue feather.

Urbino, who does not approve of Michael Angelo's friends or amusements, and who holds art and artists in equal contempt, takes it upon himself to say that his young master is not at home. A lively dispute follows, until the boy-sculptor himself appears upon the scene, in a similar cap, only with a red wing in it, to match with his red kilt, and the scarlet sash around his waist. The two, in gay defiance of Urbino, go out together to sketch and paint, and the old servant is left to grumble at such wicked goings on, and hint that some mischief is afoot.

So far all was well. Lizzie acted splendidly. The

applause was loud and frequent ; and Mr. Rollins, though evidently a little daunted by the unexpected splendor of Michael Angelo's Highland costume, joined vigorously in. And now the plot thickens !

Urbino informs old Mr. Buonorotti, as the children persisted in calling him, to Lizzie's great disgust, that his son is not behaving as well as could be desired. He says a great deal about low associates, meaning principally poor Sebastian, and throws out dark suspicions as to the manner in which these young spendthrifts have wasted a large sum of money. The venerable sire in a particularly fantastic jacket over his red and grey skirt, and with his yellow hair in tight little curls all over his head, laments greatly over his son's conduct, and the estrangement between them is fostered by the devoted but disagreeable servant.

Now comes the grand scene in the Duke's garden ; where Michael Angelo amuses himself with making statues of the snow. In the original story, he moulds a Faun's head, which excites the admiration of Lorenzo and his suite until that nobleman suggests that its teeth are too perfect for its age ; whereupon the youthful sculptor knocks out a couple, and hollows the gum so skillfully that the praise is redoubled a hundred fold.

This scene had been somewhat of a poser to the children. To produce it was impossible ; to leave it out, would spoil everything ; and the whole play seemed in danger of falling through, when Lizzie's fertile little brain at last suggested an expedient. Instead of a Faun's head, which of course they could not get, they would have a flower girl, which certainly would be much prettier ; and if flower girls were not exactly in Michael Angelo's line, none of them were wise enough to know it. The Duke should remark that the statue's face though beautiful, was too grave, and the boy with a few happy touches should alter the expression into an enchanting smile.

The idea took so well that the actors enlarged on it ; and when the Duke in gorgeous attire, and with large red bows on his shoes, entered the garden followed by his magnificent suite of two small girls, Michael Angelo had already completed two full-sized figures. These statues were rightly considered the triumph of the evening. They were both carefully dressed in their best white frocks, and wore white stockings and no shoes. One of them, a pretty little blonde girl, stood with folded hands, as if in prayer ; but the flower-girl held her basket in a gracefully un-

comfortable position high above her head, and looked as if about to drop it and begin a hornpipe. Viola Middleton, aged ten, had been selected for this important post, because it was well known that no amount of fatigue could induce her to stir an inch, after she had been once "set up" for the admiration of the beholders. She was indeed motionless as a piece of marble, but in other respects did not much resemble a statue, being thin to skinniness, with a sharp, eager little face, and great, dark, flashing eyes, suggestive of anything but a snow image.

However, the audience was not critical. The Duke di Medici and his suite expressed their surprise, as well they might, at the excellence of the work ; and Michael Angelo, at his patron's suggestion, altered the flower girl's very glum expression into a severely forced smile which enraptured every one. The statue, notwithstanding that her bare brown arms were thin enough to have passed through a napkin ring, was then voted a model of loveliness, and the happy artist was crowned with laurel, before the eyes of his delighted father.

The next scene was in the Castle of Capresse, the birthplace of Michael Angelo ; but by way of heightening the effect the statues were retained, and would have done duty as marble figures with great success, had not Miss Muddleson in the very midst of the act, sent word to the flower girl to lower arms, as she was plainly much fatigued from their strained position. The order was obeyed, but it was felt to be an action that destroyed the realistic effect of the whole scene, and even Viola was not half as grateful as she might have been for the well-meant interference. Now it was made clear to all that Michael Angelo was not only a successful artist, but a model son. The money had not been wasted on foolish friends, but given in an eccentric manner to a poor and starving family. The happy father in a transport of joy, exclaims, "Come to my arms, my beloved son !" The son rushes into the paternal embrace ! The mischief-making servant weeps for joy that all is made clear, just as if it had not been his fault from the first, and with a gush of tenderness on the part of all the actors, the play came to a triumphant close.

This was the part most dreaded by poor Minnie. She had begged hard to have the embrace left out, but Lizzie was inexorable, and Michael Angelo himself enjoyed it, so it was gone through with although when the happy father called upon his son

to come to his arms, it was noticed that he took a step backwards, as if to avoid the shock, and seemed extremely glad when he got rid of him. Perhaps this was because the joyful boy in his transports managed to knock over a little table which furnished the entire apartment, and which, as though conscious of its deficiencies, and anxious to do its best, fell to the floor with crash enough for a whole set of chairs and sofas. Even this would not have been so bad, if Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was always distinguished by his obliging disposition, had not forgotten his high rank and sprung forward to pick it up; while Urbino stood calmly by, as though accustomed every day to have the cream of the Italian nobility do the work he so haughtily disregarded.

However the applause was so loud and long that the actors felt justly complemented, and it was announced that by way of epilogue, there would now be presented the sorrowful tableau of Michael Angelo's Death.

Accordingly, after five minute's wait, the curtain again rose, and revealed the touching spectacle of the great sculptor on his death bed, which consisted of two chairs well draped with shawls. Apparently time had told but little upon him, for he did not

look a day older, than when, as a boy, he modelled snow images in the Duke's garden. His dark hair still curled closely around his smooth plump face, and even his clothes, so well had he taken care of them during a long and eventful life, were as fresh and handsome as in those by-gone days.

The baker's cap and the wooden sword had indeed disappeared, but all the rest was unchanged; while around his couch in graceful attitudes knelt his father, the Duke, Sebastian and Urbino, equally unaltered, and weeping into clean white handkerchiefs. And now from behind the scenes were heard the plaintive notes of "Home, Sweet Home," played with much skill and beauty by a clever little Irish girl, on that saddest of all musical instruments — a comb.

It was too much!

Several times during the progress of the play, had Mr. Rollins seemed more or less affected; but at this point, his feelings overcame him, and he buried his face in his own handkerchief, while his whole frame shook convulsively, it is to be presumed, with sobs. Stifled sounds, which somewhat resembled weeping broke out in different parts of the room and midst a silence more telling than the loudest applause, the curtain for the last time was slowly lowered, and the great event was over.

CORPORAL CLOVER.



ROUND cap and red feather
 Bobbing in the summer weather,
 Pretty suit of mottled green —
 A finer fellow was never seen!
 He nods and beckons to the daisies;
 At the wild rose winks and gazes;
 Listens to the brown-bee's story
 Of her summer joy and glory;
 The birds come and sing above him;
 The little chirping crickets love him;
 The beetles in their shining armor
 March gravely round the merry charmer —
 What a life for Red-feather,
 Smiling in the summer weather,
 With the blue sky arching over —
 Jolly little Corporal Clover!